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**Children & Family Services  
Committee**

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**HB 2039**

**Brief Description:** Changing provisions relating to mental health services for children.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Roberts, Hinkle, Dickerson, Pettigrew, Kagi, Green, Darneille, Schual-Berke, Moeller, Chase, Kenney and Santos.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Adds children at risk of becoming severely emotionally disturbed to the priority populations for mental health services.

**Hearing Date:** February 23, 2005.

**Staff:** Cynthia Forland (786-7152).

**Background:**

State law requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), which is the designated state mental health authority, to assure that any regional or county community mental health program provides access to treatment for the county's residents in the following order of priority: acutely mentally ill; chronically mentally ill adults and severely emotionally disturbed children; and the seriously disturbed.

In addition, those regional or county programs are required to provide the following:

- outpatient services;
- emergency care services for 24 hours per day;
- day treatment for mentally ill persons, including training in basic living and social skills, supported work, vocational rehabilitation, and day activities, and, in the case of a child, age-appropriate basic living and social skills, educational and pre-vocational services, day activities, and therapeutic treatment;
- screening for patients being considered for admission to state mental health facilities to determine the appropriateness of admission;
- employment services, which may include supported employment, transitional work, placement in competitive employment, and other work-related services, that result in mentally ill persons becoming engaged in meaningful and gainful full-time or part-time work;
- consultation and education services; and
- community support services.

The DSHS, in consultation with affected parties, is also required to establish a distribution formula that reflects county needs assessments based on the number of persons who fall within the priority populations. The formula must include a projection of the funding allocations that will result for each county, which specifies allocations according to priority populations, including the allocation for services to children and other underserved populations.

The Mental Health Division of the DSHS contracts with 14 county-operated Regional Support Networks (RSNs) for the provision of community-based outpatient and inpatient services. The RSNs plan and administer community-based services, and contract with approximately 150 public and private providers of community mental health services. Within the funds allocated to them, RSNs are required to provide a full-range of mental health services to all individuals who are eligible for Medicaid, crisis services as identified in state law for all individuals, and, if funding is available, broader services to individuals who are not eligible for Medicaid.

**Summary of Bill:**

The list of priority populations for access to treatment through any regional or county community mental health program is expanded to include children determined by the RSN to be at risk of becoming severely emotionally disturbed.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on February 15, 2005.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.